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ABSTRACT

The goal of education in general and of reading instruction in particular is to prepare students for the future. The psychological, social, and economic changes brought about by technological advancements require reading teachers to make a number of changes and adjustments in their classrooms. To prepare students for a world shaped by technology, teachers need to (1) teach students how to think and how to acquire and organize information, (2) help students adjust to change and diversity, (3) foster an anticipatory attitude in students for considering the long-range consequences of alternative solutions to problems, (4) internationalize the curriculum by providing opportunities for students to enlarge their global understandings through cooperative endeavors, and (5) foster in students positive feelings of self-worth and competency so that they can cope with the uncertainties of the future. (FL)

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DIRECTIONS AND READING ACTIVITIES FOR THE STUDENTS OF TODAY AND TOMORROW

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DIRECTIONS AND READING ACTIVITIES FOR THE STUDENTS OF TODAY AND TOMORROW

The goal of education in general and of reading instruction in particular is to prepare students for the expanding world of the future. The psychological, social, and economic changes driven by technological advances impact on the reading curriculum. This paper will seek to relate these changes to reading instruction. The increased tempo of the scientific and technological progress is such as to make it hazardous to forecast the future for the electronic generation. As the robot is changing the factory floor and working environment, so is technological advance changing the landscape of the classroom and the climate for learning. Computers are vitalizing the communication of information by means of sight, sound, and movement.

In view of the technological forces that are impinging on society, what can teachers of reading do to educate most effectively the students of today and tomorrow?

Directions and Activities

1. It is necessary for reading educators to teach students how to think, how to gain access to information, and how to organize information into overall conceptual frameworks. In teaching students how to think, teachers

should stress metacognitive processes in reading. In this way, students gain greater control over their thinking and learning activities. Metacognition is the conscious awareness by individuals of knowing what they know, when they know it, and how they come to know it. Teachers, can help in this process through "think aloud" modeling strategies (Davey, 1983) and "reciprocal teaching" (Palincsar and Brown, 1984). Teachers model the strategies used by skilled readers, verbalizing their thoughts as they read passages, thinking through trouble spots, and describing their fix-up strategies. Students are encouraged to question the teacher and their peers about the metacognitive processes in reading. In teaching students how to think, the computer has a role. Computers which can be programmed by children have the potential to promote cognitive development as the child is manipulating symbols and actively structuring experiences for general understanding. Dreyer asserts that Logo "seems to have the potential to promote more learning in more people than any other technology since the invention of moveable type 500 years ago" (1984, p. 68). On the other hand CAI ("computer assisted instruction") in guiding the student tends to induce passivity, encouraging convergent, atomistic thinking. However, improvement has been shown in the heuristic CAI programs developed by Hugh Burns, Air Force Academy, and William Wresch, University of Wisconsin

Center at Marinette. In these more enlightened efforts, students are presented a series of questions to which they respond and generate their own material (Hubbard, 1985).

The mass of information doubles about every two years, making it essential for students to be able to use computer-based tools for the retrieval of information. "Developments in science and information have changed the meaning of the verb 'to know' from having information stored in one's memory to the process of having access to information" (Ornstein, p. 32).

In addition, the information overload will require students to acquire organizational skills such as outlining, summarizing, and schema mapping strategies as well as systematic study procedures. Students will need to know where to locate information, how to select relevant and significant ideas, how to organize concepts, and how to communicate ideas effectively.

2. Educators are required to help students adjust to rapid change and diversity. At a meeting in Washington, D.C., Margaret Mead spoke of the impact of new technology on schools, "... to the multiple functions of an educational system we must add a quite new function: education for rapid and self-conscious adaptation to a changing world" (Corrigan, 1974, pp. 100-101). Peter Drucker added, "Since we live in an age of innovation, a practical education must prepare a man for work that does not yet exist and cannot be clearly defined" (Corrigan, 1974, p. 101).

Therefore, workers of the future may need retraining at various periods of their lives. The community schools of the future must furnish teachers, resources, and equipment for lifelong learning. Teachers who provide career education programs that describe the changing patterns of employment will make students aware of the multiple options in the future.

The fact that students are faced with changing family relationships and lifestyles was recognized by Eno (1949). Books about children from broken homes were included in reading lists or suggested individually to students who would soon go to foster homes. Eno felt that the way in which characters in these stories solved problems might aid children in making similar adjustments. Thus, bibliotherapy can be used to help students cope with changing lifestyles and relationships. Rubin (1978), in her comprehensive review of theory and practice in the use of bibliotherapy, presents research, guidelines, procedures, cautions, and materials related to the process.

Diversity is reflected in the multiracial and multicutural composition of the classrooms of today. Teachers can help students relate to different ethnic groups by studying the similarities and differences in customs and traditions. Literature can extend students' understandings of other cultures and lifestyles. Stories, such as Quiet Boy, who is torn between the two worlds of the Navajo and Anglo societies, or Jafta, the Journey, a tale of a

South African boy, who leaves his rural village and travels with his mother to the city where his father works, can increase empathic responses to other peoples and cultures. Also, role-playing and dramatization in which students assume different roles in varied settings, foster flexibility and imagination as well as deeper understandings of literature.

Diversity of viewpoint and flexibility are encouraged by Paul (1985), who advocates dialogical practice between proponents of opposing points of view on political issues. Students identify with different viewpoints and develop a dialogical exchange. This process, declares Paul, requires empathy and reciprocity as the students exchange their positions on the issues. Respect for another's point of view is of paramount importance as the students identify weaknesses and try to create reasonable defenses. Materials such as the Opposing Viewpoints Book Series (Greenhaven Press, Inc.) can be used as a foundation for research and dialogical practice on current issues.

A program that recognizes the conflicting and changing values and ethical issues that will continue to confront students is the Philosophy for Children curriculum (early childhood through secondary school), which emerged from the Institute for the Advancement of Philosophy for Children, Montclair State College, Montclair, New Jersey. This program emphasizes classroom dialogue on philosophical issues as the foundation for reasoning and concept

development. Reasoning skills are applied to moral predicaments of everyday life. Children's novels serve as catalysts for the discussion of concepts such as fairness, friendship, and goodness. Alternative modes of thought and imagination are encouraged through cooperative inquiry and discussion skills.

3. Anticipating and planning for future possibilities can alleviate the individual's sense of shock when changes occur. Toffler describes the importance of looking ahead:

> 350 years after his death, scientists are still finding evidence to support Cervantes' succinct insight into adaptational psychology: 'fore-warned, fore-armed.' Self-evident as it may seem, in most situations we can help individuals adapt better if we simply provide them with advance information about what lies ahead (1970, p. 371).

The anticipatory attitude can be fostered through prereading strategies such as advanced organizers, structured overviews, semantic mapping as well as directed-reading-thinking activities, which help students to anticipate cognitively and affectively and to relate new information to their existing schemata or memory structures.

Teachers and students also need to identify critical issues and problems and anticipate the outcomes of possible solutions through long-range planning. The importance of present sacrifice for future comfort and survival needs to be stressed. Kauffman (1976) describes models,

systems, and simulations that can be used in the classroom to show the relationships of various components of problems.

4. Teachers will need to enlarge the global understanding of students because technological advance and telecommunication networks have meant closer connections with peoples throughout the world. Transnational problems such as pollution, soil depletion, nuclear energy, disease, and international terrorism will require critical thinking on the part of students to clarify conflicting ideas. Analysis of various points of view on critical issues is essential for making even tentative decisions. Rank's (1976) intensify and downplay schema is a useful tool for analyzing communication, persuasion, and propaganda, which can be applied to verbal and nonverbal communication. This schema emphasizes the intensification of language through repetition, association, and composition and the downplaying of language through omission, diversion, and confusion.

Studies of supranational efforts and agencies such as the United Nations agencies, the European Coal and Steel Community, and the supranational authority on the Law of the Sea can help students realize that cooperative action among nations is necessary for improved world conditions.

In addition, field trips, speakers, pen pals, and exchanges with schools in different goegraphical settings can enlarge the circle of awareness of students and help in promoting cosmopolitan attitudes.

5. Students will need a strong sense of their self-worth in order to cope with the uncertainties and ambiguities of life in the nuclear age. The teacher's attitude of positive expectancy toward the directions that students take to fulfill their purposes is of primary importance in enhancing feelings of self-respect and competency. Good teaching, according to Purkey (1984), is the process of inviting students to see themselves as able, valuable, and self-directing, encouraging them to act in accordance with these self-perceptions.

Interactive computer simulations where students take command and create their own situations have the potential of promoting feelings of competency. Teachers who provide opportunities for students to program machines, to manipulate symbols and ideas in varied ways, to test and revise hypotheses, to take risks, make mistakes, and go on will encourage feelings of confidence and efficacy.

The concept of fixability, which states that mistakes on the computer are fixable, has therapeutic dimensions for students. Through trial and error, students experiment with complex ideas and events and develop traits of persistence and flexibility in creating new microworlds.

Literature, as a complement to technology, has the potential of influencing a reader's self-image. How literary figures have coped with changes, successes, and failures can give students insight into their behavior patterns and values. The literature provides dramatic

accounts of characters in conflict with other human beings, with nature, and with themsleves. "The conflict with the heart -- the tug between two loyalties, two evils, or what appears to be two equally precious goods -- is probably the most instructive of all" (Brooks, 1985, p. 99).

Summary

An attempt has been made to relate activities to the changes that are developing as a result of scientific and technological advancement. Five directions with concomitant activities for reading instruction are submitted for consideration. First, reading educators should teach students how to think and how to acquire and organize information since the information glut will be a characteristic of the future. Second, teachers should help students adjust to change and diversity for tomorrow's world of multiple options. Third, teachers should foster an anticipatory attitude in students in considering the long-range consequences of alternative solutions to problems. Fourth, teachers should internationalize the curriculum by providing opportunities for students to enlarge their global understandings through cooperative endeavors. Fifth, teachers should foster in students positive feelings of self-worth and competency in order to cope with the uncertainties of the world of tomorrow.

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